

INTERVIEWING WITH CONFIDENCE



Counseling and Career Services
Howard Community College

AGENDA

- PURPOSE
- PREPARATION
- INTERVIEW FORMATS
- PARTS TO THE INTERVIEW
- EVALUATING OFFERS

THE EMPLOYER'S PURPOSE

- *Can you?*
 - Qualifications
 - Skills and qualifications
- *Will you?*
 - Motivation
 - Interests and goals
- *Fit you?*
 - Values
 - Likeability

YOUR PURPOSE

- *To describe*
 - How you can (your skills)
 - Why you will (your motivation/interest)
 - Why they should (your likeability)
- *To discover*
 - Who they are
 - Do they fit you?

PREPARATION: KNOW THYSELF

- Your top 3-5 skills (Qualifications) - *Can you do the work?*
- Your Interests (Motivation) - *Will you do the work?*
- Your Values (Motivation and Fit) - *Will you do the work and will you fit the employer's mission and culture?*

VALUED COMPETENCIES

- Managing transition
- Cross-functional teamwork
- Partnering
- Customer focus
- Problem solving
- Communications skills
- Being proactive
- Seeing the big picture
- Thinking outside the box



PREPARATION: KNOW THE EMPLOYER

- Mission or product
- Reputation
- Locations
- History and stability
- Culture, atmosphere
- Competitors, size,
- Name of President and other officers

Sources of Company Research

- <http://www.wetfeet.com>
- <http://www.collegegrad.com/employers/>
- www.vault.com
- www.hoovers.com/free
- www.reuters.com
- <http://www.nationjob.com/howardcountymd/companies>
- Others on the resources list
- Company's web page, annual reports, *Encyclopedia of Associations*, trade journals, Wall Street Journal, chambers of commerce, friends/acquaintance

PREPARATION: KNOW THE POSITION

- Duties, requirements, salary range
- Sources:
 - *Occupational Outlook Handbook*
 - *Guide for Occupational Exploration*
 - Informational interviews, employment agencies.
 - Job description if possible

PREPARATION: REHEARSE ANSWERS TO COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- In front of mirror
 - With a friend
 - In writing
 - With a career counselor
 - On video or audio
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- See handout for commonly asked questions

QUESTIONING FRAMEWORKS

Behavioral

- Recent behavior indicates future behavior in similar situations

Situational

- Presented with a real situation you would encounter on the job and asked how you would respond.

PREPARATION CHECKLIST

- Master application
- Extra resumes
- Reference list
- Work samples
- Pen, notepad
- Question to ask
- Comb or brush!
- Name, address, phone number of interviewer
- Directions
- Dry run
- Job description

DRESS FOR SUCCESS: MEN

- Dark gray or navy suit
- Long sleeve white shirt with cuff just past sleeve. White undershirt (no v-neck)
- Socks same color as pants
- Belt same color as shoes
- Tie should reach just above belt buckle.
- No strong cologne

DRESS FOR SUCCESS: WOMEN

- Dark skirt/suit with white blouse or color that blends or formal pants suits
- Pumps - black or color that matches suit
- Stockings - neutral color
- Small earrings and simple necklace
- No nail art
- Avoid large, flashy jewelry and strong perfume

DRESS TIPS FOR MEN AND WOMEN

- Clothing should be clean, pressed, and color coordinated
- Err on the side of dressing conservatively
- Dress one step above what you would normally wear on the job
- Hair should be clean, neatly cut and combed

THE INTERVIEW: FORMATS

- Phone: Used for screening. Smile!!!
- Individual: One-to-one. With HR rep (screening) or hiring manager.
- Serial: Series of individual interviews (HR rep, manager, coworkers, subordinates).
- Panel: Several interviewers at once around a conference table (stressful!).

“PACE” TO IMPRESS

- Professionalism
 - Punctuality
 - Dress
- Attitude
 - Experience
- Confidence
 - Abilities
- Examples
 - Accomplishments

PARTS TO THE INTERVIEW

Introduction: Breaking the ice

- Be on time (15 minutes early)
- Greet with firm handshake and maintain eye contact and good posture
- Demonstrate confidence
- Follow employer's lead
- Kindly refuse offers for food or drink

Parts to the Interview (cont'd)

Interviewer's Questions:

- Lead with your strengths. Be positive about self and former/current employer.
- Make every answer relate to the position.
- Demonstrate what you can do for them, not what they can do for you. Use examples of accomplishments/strengths
- Demonstrate knowledge of the company.

Why do you want to work for us?

Parts to the Interview

Interviewer's Questions (cont'd)

- Be enthusiastic about position and employer
- Take your time in answering; speak slowly.
- Beware of body language
- Ask for clarification of questions if needed.
- Think before you answer
- Be brief
- Be truthful.

Parts to the Interview

Interviewer's Questions (cont'd)

Answering Difficult Questions:

- Think before you answer
- Be truthful
- Take responsibility for the past while focusing on the future.
- See handout on answering interview questions

Parts to the Interview (cont'd)

Questions for the Employer

- Ask questions that reflect your knowledge about and interest in the employer's mission or product and the position.
- Generally: Avoid asking about salary until you are a finalist or are offered the job. Your job is to impress them about what you can do for them, not what they can do for you.
- See handout with sample questions.

Parts to the Interview (cont'd)

Closing:

- Follow the employer's lead that interview is ending.
- Close on an upbeat statement. Reiterate what you have to offer, why you are a good match, and how you would fit into their operations.
- Get business cards from everyone you meet.
- Ask about next steps and when they plan to make a decision.

Parts to the Interview (cont'd)

Debriefing: After the interview:

- Critique your performance; what went well and what could be improved next time.
- Send thank you notes within 24 hours to everyone who interviewed you
- Follow up with additional info as requested and to show your initiative (e.g., info you found on the internet about something that came up during the interview).

EVALUATING OFFERS

- How does the position utilize your skills and relate to your goals and interests? Potential for growth.
- Company's expectations vs. your needs.
- Your Values - Can you support the company's mission or product?
- Strengths of company
- Work Conditions
- Salary/benefits: Know your bottom line.
- Pluses / minuses.

KEY POINTS

- Know:
 - Yourself
 - The employer
 - The position
 - What to expect
- Make a positive first impression
- Practice
- Answer questions that show your ability to do the job
- Relate every answer to the job in question

SAMPLE

- Good answer example:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qR-IhZJOq3U>

- Creative technique:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HbJHkwHZCCM>

PRACTICE

Practice answering the following questions with a partner:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Please describe your strengths.
3. Please describe your weaknesses.
4. Why should we hire you?

FOR MORE ASSISTANCE
CALL COUNSELING AND
CAREER SERVICES



(410) 772-4840

RCF 302

MON – WED - 8:30 AM TO 8:00 PM

THURS AND FRI – 8:30 AM TO 5:00 PM